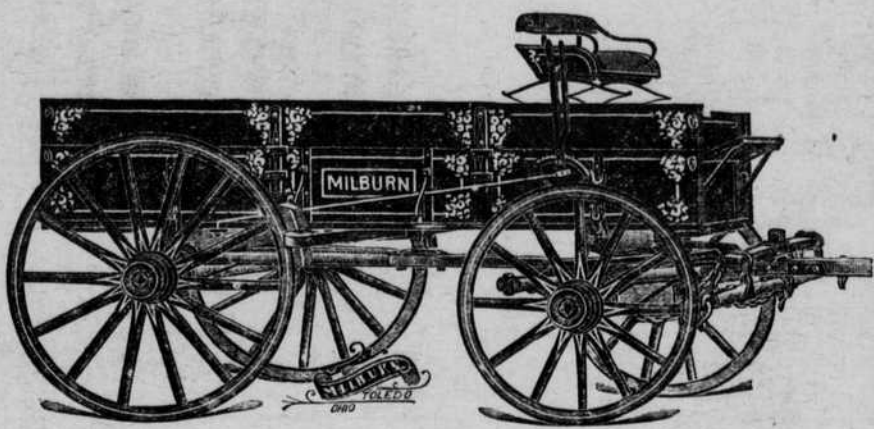


# SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT MILBURN WAGON COMPANY.

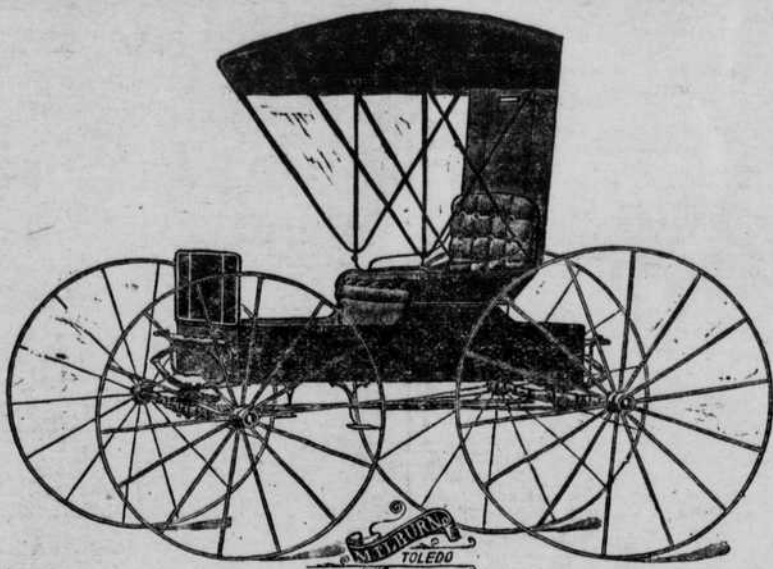
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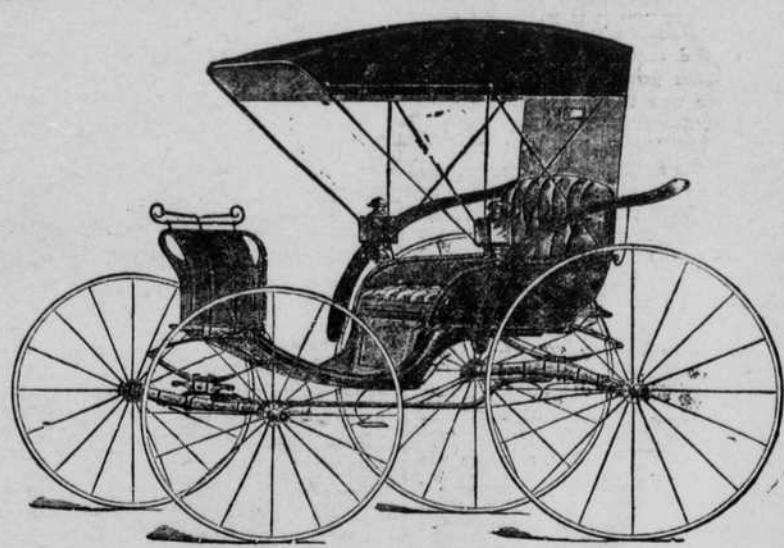
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## The Left-Handed Couple

BY E. McPHERSEN.

There was a stir in Washington society; and I, a society girl detective, was consulted about it.

In Washington there are public receptions which practically, the whole world attends. Cards are sent out, and scores come with no cards at all, and the nunny at the door without inspection, lets them in upon the merits of a silk hat and a long coat. The women he measures by their ornaments.

Mrs. Secretary X—, the wife of a cabinet minister, sent for me one day to tell me that numerous thefts had been going on in her house at her receptions, and she asked me if I would attend these functions with a card, and keep my eye out for the guilty ones. It was so annoying, she said, to have one's friends robbed in one's own house of valuables.

I promised Mrs. X— that I would attend her receptions in future, and she wrote my name and address in her invitation book. Scarcely had I reached home when I found Mrs. Secretary Y—, another cabinet lady, had called to see me, leaving word that she would call an hour later. When she came I received her with some nutter of excitement, for it was not every day that the wife of a cabinet officer calls, and I did not know whether etiquette bade me receive her in the parlor or whether I should ask her to my own little apartments. She set my uncertainty at rest by saying, "I wish to see you alone a minute."

I took her to my room, showed her in and closed my door. "My call is one of most confidential business, said she, "and I come to you upon recommendation of the chief of police of Washington. I am in the habit, as you know, of holding regular Wednesday afternoon receptions. Last Wednesday after my reception I lost a valuable chateaufort, and one of my guests lost a watch. A week ago no less than three thefts took place and so it has continued through the winter, until I am annoyed lest the matter gain publicity. It is terrible," said she nervously, "to think that I cannot receive my friends in my own parlor without a robbery."

"Do you suspect any one?" I asked. "No," said she, "I do not. There is no one on my invitation list whom I regard with suspicion."

"I will do all I can," I said, "in the meantime leave it with me. Place me upon your invitation list and see that I am invited to your house on every occasion."

When she had gone I seated myself and did some vigorous thinking. "It is evidently some one who attends these public receptions," I said to myself, "and that person may be either a man or a woman, a left-handed person! He or she must have considerable experience in 'lifting' or neither could be so expert." Mrs. X— had the services of a professional detective at one of her receptions, she told me, yet at this reception she and her guests lost many articles.

A society detective must act and dress like other women, so my next move in the work of finding the guilty party was to drive to the best dressmaker in Washington there to order a handsome reception dress. "They will be less apt to suspect my vocation," I said, "if I carry out the deception of being simply a guest. I shall wear many jewels and play the role of a wealthy woman on a visit to Washington."

At the next reception of Mrs. X—, my first client, I was present and was introduced to many people. The following day was Mrs. Y—'s regular reception day, and there, too, I had the pleasure of a pleasant afternoon. I carefully observed all who came and went, but to my chagrin, I saw nobody on whom I could fasten the faintest suspicion. It is different work catching thieves in a store and spotting pickpockets in a crowd from detecting a robber in a private house. In the stores I could work openly and in the street I could watch publicly, even exposing my badge of public service, but in society the detective must be a society woman, and her work of deception must be carried on while she discusses society topics and talks small talk with the men and women.

I talked small talk to all the men, keeping my eyes on all about me.

When the afternoon was over my hostess came to me and whispered, "have you discovered anything?"

"No," I said, "nothing."

"Well," said she, "that is a pity because there have been three losses reported. Mrs. Peyton has lost a watch, Mrs. Brownlee a handsome pin which confined the right lapel of her coat, and Mrs. Grey has lost a valuable stone from a ring which she

wore on her right hand."

I went home much discouraged, for I had seen nothing suspicious, and yet under my eyes there must have gone on the theft of these jewels. A few days later I attended a reception at the house of Mrs. X—, for my two ladies were entertaining a great deal, and their receptions occurred so often that I found my social calendar filled attending them. Mrs. X—'s reception was a very large one of a semi-public character, and here, thought I, I would have an opportunity to meet everybody.

The afternoon passed away without occurrence of any kind. I had left word

Russell of Idaho. As I touched my finger tips to her extended ones I noticed that she held in the palm of her hand almost concealed by her handkerchief, a small, gold smelling bottle heavily chased, and from the subdued gleam, thickly set with diamonds. She passed on in a few minutes I found myself, as one will at a reception, chatting with another stranger, this time a gentleman.

I had met him several times before at different gatherings and knew him to be one of that enormous class in Washington, a hanger-on in society. His name was Phenix. I found he passed for a literary man who was studying Washington types.

pocket? It closely resembles one I remember seeing some time ago, and you would do me a favor by allowing me to look at it."

He started, started at me and turned pale.

"Impossible!" said he.

"Why?"

"Because—" he answered.

"Then if you will not allow me to see it I must come to the conclusion that you did not come by it honestly," I said, looking him in the eyes.

"What in the world is all this trouble about?" exclaimed a high, sweet soprano voice, and turning I saw at my side Mrs. Representative Russell.

"Only this," said I, "I saw in this gentleman's pocket a gold smelling bottle which you carried at moment ago. I presumed that you had dropped it, and that he picked it up, and I ventured to make inquiries about it."

He took it out of his pocket. "There is some mistake, I never saw it before! You have made a great blunder, Miss R."



"THE TWO SHOOK HANDS WARMLY."

with my hostess that she should notify me if anything was taken.

As I stood in the middle of the room chatting with a diplomat my attention was aroused by a hum of admiration near the door. I glanced in that direction and saw entering the room with an usher, a large handsome woman of exquisite figure and striking beauty. She was magnificently gowned and at her throat and neck were jewels of enormous size and lustre.

"Who is she?" I asked the diplomat. "The wife of a western representative, I believe," said he. "I do not just recall there are so many handsome women," he added gallantly.

It was some minutes before chance took me to the side of the wealthy woman, when by some chance I heard her name pronounced and mine, and we found ourselves face to face. She acknowledged the introduction sweetly and extended to me a delicately gloved hand. She was a Mrs.

I joked him laughingly about the frequency of our meeting and he replied as gallantly. As he turned to leave me I saw something in the pocket of his vest which attracted my eye and made me pause suddenly. I called him back on some slight pretext and talked with him a moment more with my eyes covertly examining the pocket.

As he passed I said to myself, "so I have found the thief." In that man's pocket was the identical jeweled smelling bottle which Mrs. Representative Russell carried a minute ago.

I worked my way to my hostess and asked her—anything had been reported. "No," she said, "nothing as yet."

But I knew something had gone wrong for my eyes were sharp, and I determined upon my course. I stepped to the front door and as the gentleman was going out I touched him upon the elbow.

"Will you kindly allow me," said I, "to examine a trinket which you have in your

They both looked at me with a smile and the woman gave a mocking laugh while my literary Mr. Phenix escorted her out to her carriage. Chagrined, and almost ready to cry, I stepped back into the drawing room where my hostess came hurrying to me. "You are just in time," said she, "where were you, I have been looking for you? I have just discovered the loss of a gold smelling bottle which hung at my right side. It may have been gone an hour, for it is some time since I used it."

She described it. It was gold, chased, and studded with diamonds.

When I went home that evening I was greatly perplexed, but in my mind I had a plan which I felt would work well.

Two days later I was at another reception, and here I met the same beautiful Mrs. Representative Russell; and here also was the same literary Mr. Phenix. I knew the two would be there and somehow I felt that I should catch them!

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## EMPIRE LAUNDRY 1819 2nd Ave.

About Seeds As the time is now approaching for making Spring Gardens, it should interest one to know where SEEDS may be obtained to the best advantage. To amateurs, as well as professional gardeners, our advice would be to write or call on AMZ EGGEN COMPANY, Birmingham, Ala., and request a copy of their beautiful Seed Catalogue and Garden Guide, the most accurate book of its kind ever published for the South. They have gone to great expense in publishing the 1893 issue, but it will be given or sent free to those who will appreciate it, or are interested. 1-9-d&wt

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The woman was strikingly beautiful that evening and everywhere she moved she was the center of attraction. I watched her closely and noticed one peculiarity, she was left handed! And I remembered that nearly all the articles were taken from the right side—by a left handed person.

In watching the literary Mr. Phenix I noticed that he too was left handed, and the singular coincidence kept me wondering.

That afternoon a beautiful little ruby watch disappeared. It was pinned on the waist of a prominent society woman and at 4 o'clock she noticed the time.

At 4:35 it was gone! I had been noticing the wearer and was the first to detect the absence of the watch. I called her attention to it and she lifted her hand to her bosom and found that it had been unpinned. She was greatly agitated, for the trifle was a valuable one and she prized it highly.

"Oh! What shall I do?" she exclaimed, "and last week, in this very house I lost a pin."

"Too bad," I said to her sympathetically, but I determined to work as hastily as possible. I went to my hostess and informed her of what had happened. "I am going now," said I, "and I may, or may not, return later."

and as he turned to leave the spot I stepped up to him.

"I arrest you," said I, "as an accomplice in the theft of a watch and unless you come quietly I shall have you taken into custody in public."

He seemed greatly put out and tried to treat the matter lightly.

"You are of a very suspicious nature," said he, "and for the second time in a week you are mistaken. I have taken nothing neither am I guilty of any wrong."

"You have in your hand now," said I, "a small ruby watch which your accomplice took from a lady's dress fifteen minutes ago. Last week you stole three watches, and all the season you have been indulging in thefts. I have a complete chain of evidence and am prepared to have you punished to the full extent of the law."

He stammered some kind of a denial and turned pale. He took a quick step forward and, fearing that he intended to escape, I took a little whistle from my pocket and blew three full-blown blasts. This brought an officer from the corner to my aid and I turned the man over to him.

When the case came up it was found that the woman was a professional thief and had served a term in state's prison. The man was her husband. The two had come to Washington to reap a rich harvest during the Washington season, and had taken advantage of the generosity of Washington and the publicity of cabinet receptions to work their way into favor under the guise of political and literary work.

How well they had succeeded was shown by the fact that no less than forty handsome pieces of jewelry were found concealed in their apartments.